

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9486

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2781

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT PINR PROP CH

SUBJECT: FEI I-MIN COMMENTS ON CAMPAIGN

REF: H.K. 2768

1. CALLING ATTENTION TO THE MARCH 10 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL ON THE ANTI-RIGHTIST CRITICISM CAMPAIGN (HK 2739) TA KUNG PAO PUBLISHER FEI I-MIN TOLD CONGEN OFFICERS THE SAME DAY THAT THIS EDITORIAL HONED THE FOCUS OF DEBATE AND IMPLIED THAT IT WAS TENG, AND TENG ALONE WHO WAS THE TARGET OF THE ATTACK. FEI EMPHASIZED THAT THE HUA KUO-FENG BANQUET STATEMENT (HK2010) AND THE SPRING PLANTING EDITORIAL (HK 2103) WERE THE ONLY OTHER TRULY AUTHORITATIVE CENTRAL SOURCES ON THE CAMPAIGN. HIS OWN READING OF THE CURRENT EDITORIAL WAS THAT IT REINFORCED THE REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO KEEP THE DEBATE CONTROLLED, NARROWED THE DEBATE TO TENG, AND THAT IT SOUGHT TO

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CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN PROMINENCE TO MAO'S OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

ON "STABILITY AND UNITY" AND BOOSTING PRODUCTION.

2. ADMITTING THAT TENG, PROBABLY BETWEEN MAY AND JULY, MADE THE STATEMENT THAT THE THREE INSTRUCTIONS WERE THE KEY LINK, FEI SEEMED INTENT ON CREATING EVERY POSSIBLE EXCUSE FOR TENG HAVING DONE SO. ASSERTING THAT TENG WAS VERY BUSY, FEI SUGGESTED TENG MAY HAVE MADE THE STATEMENT RATHER CASUALLY AND HE SEEMED TO BE HINTING THAT TENG WAS NOT TOTALLY LOST. IN FACT, RESPONDING TO TWO QUESTIONS ON TENG'S STATUS, FEI SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN ONLY ONE POLITBURO INSTRUCTION ON POSITIONS. THAT CONCERNED THE APPOINTMENT OF HUA, AND, ADDING AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, THE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT OF YEH CHIEN-YING'S DUTIES TO CHEN HSI-LIEN BECAUSE OF YEH'S ILLNESS. GOING ONE STEP FURTHER, FEI THEN STATED THAT ANY CHANGES IN STATUS OR POSITIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE DECIDED--ALONG WITH THE ENTIRE ISSUE OF TENG AND HIS LINE--AT THE THIRD PLENUM OF THE TENTH CONGRESS.

3. FEI GAVE FURTHER ROOM FOR EXCUSES BY ASSERTING THAT PRIOR TO THE CONVENING OF FOURTH NPC, THE DELEGATES HAD RECEIVED THE "THREE INSTRUCTIONS" IN A COLLECTIVE PACKAGE FROM THE PARTY AND THAT THEY WERE "ATTRIBUTED" TO CHAIRMAN MAO. FEI CALLED ATTENTION TO AN OCTOBER 15 PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE BY AN NCNA REPORTER, CALLING IT THE FIRST PUBLIC MENTION OF THE THREE DIRECTIVES AS THE KEY LINK. (WE HAVE LOCATED THE ARTICLE WHICH NOT ONLY REFERRED TO THE THREE AS THE GENERAL LINK BUT CALLED THEM "ONE" AND "INSEPARABLE.") STATING THAT EVERYONE HAD OVERLOOKED THIS AT THE TIME, HE CALLED IT AN OBVIOUS REVERSAL OF MAO'S LINE. FEI ASSERTED IF THAT TENG LINE TOOK HOLD, FACTORY MANAGERS AND CADRES WOULD NATURALLY EMPHASIZE THE STABILITY AND PRODUCTION PARTS OF THE EQUATION AND THAT IDEOLOGY WOULD SOON LOSE SWAY.

4. FEI REVEALED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME INSTRUCTIONS FROM PEKING WHICH HAVE DEFINED THE CAMPAIGN AS ONE LIMITED TO CHINA PROPER AND NOT TO BE CARRIED OUT ABROAD EITHER IN HONG KONG, MACAO OR A DIPLOMATIC POSTS. FEI ADDED THAT THERE WAS THEREFORE A QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS OWN PAPER'S COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN AND THAT OF THE PEKING PAPERS. HE NOTED SPECIFICALLY THAT NCNA DOMESTIC HAD REPLAYED SOME 32 ARTICLES ON THE CAMPAIGN BUT THAT NCNA CONFIDENTIAL

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ENGLISH HAD ONLY DONE SO THREE TIMES.

COMMENT: FEI'S RELAXED DISCUSSION OF THE CAMPAIGN FITS CLOSELY WITH THAT OF NCNA DEPUTY DIRECTOR LI CHU-SHENG DURING HIS RECENT TALK WITH THE CONSUL GENERAL (HK2649). STATEMENTS THAT HE WAS "REASSURED" BY THE EDITORIAL AND BY THE APPEARANCE OF MATERIALS PAYING DUE RESPECT TO THE LATE PREMIER CHOU (REFTEL) SUGGESTS THAT FEI IS CONVINCED THE FUTURE DIRECTION

OF THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE NON-EXPLOSIVE. AND, WHILE HE SEES
TENG AS THE TARGET, FEI IMPLIES EVEN TENG'S ULTIMATE FATE
IS STILL OPEN TO QUESTION AND DEPENDS ON HIS ABILITY TO REFORM
HIMSELF.
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